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2003

AWA 690

9 MAY 1954

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PESUCCESS/HYBAT

Chief of Station, Guatemala

LINCOLE

INFO: PBSUCCESS, Readquarters

Biographic Guillermo GRIFFEL

HGG-A-998 - F/1-F-

- 1. We note in paragraph 1, page 2, of the memorandum attached to the reference: ". . . Senor CRIFFEL had for some time acted as procurer for expresident AREVALO and now, possibly, for President AREVALO."
- 2. The information quoted above could be put to considerable propaganda use, either against AREVALO or -- preferably -- against AREVALO before deciding whether to use it or what specifically to no with the information quoted, we would like you to rowide us with additional information on that subject.
- 3. In particular we would supreciate your comments as to voat you consider would be the effect of implicating Sr. TRIFFEL in any story we intend to publish. Furthernore, we would like to receive say identities of the ladies who were actually procured (pictures if possible), the dates, places, and other circumstances of their association with either ARBENZ or AMEVAIA, and any pertinent details which you might be able to dig out.
- 4. Do not let the above requirements detract you from any major operations underway: but if the request can be filled without too great additional effort it might conceivably add an effective angle to our anti-personnel campaign.

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CFL/ scw 6 May 1994 Listribution:

2 - 6847

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PBSUCCESS/RYBAT

VI STEED COURIER

(SPECIFY AIR OR SEA POUCH)

DISPATCH NO RGG-A-998

SECRET PBSUCCESS RYBAT

CLASSIFICATION

MAY 4 1954

TO

LINCOLN

DATE: _

FROM :

Chief of Station, Guatemala

INFO: Chief, WHD

SUBJECT: GENERAL-

Arms and Ammunition

SPECIFIC-

Guillermo KRIFFEL

Reference: GUAT 202

Attached for Lincoln and Heddquarters is one copy of a memorandum prepared by Mr. Harold E. Urist, Public Affairs Officer, containing additional information on subject and dated 29 April 1954.

Clara M. Heagey

Enclosure:

Memo as noted

30 April 1954

CMH/cmh
Distribution:
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5 MAY 1954

SECRET PBSUCESS RYBAT



Mr. Krieg

April 29, 1954

Harold E. Urist

GUILLERMO GRIFFEL

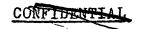
Since there has been a reference in incoming correspondence to a Sr. Guillermo GRIFFEL, I hereby submit a memorandum reporting everything I know about the individual.

I met Sr. Griffel in December 1951 when we were fellowpassengers on a flight to New York. He was on a business trip and was attempting to buy some metal piping. I learned that he had come to Guatemala from Austria when he was a young man and had been in Guatemala ever since, having become a naturalized citizen. He told me that he was a partner in the A. Zadik Company, that he went to the Petén each chicle-collecting season to supervise a chicle operation there, and that he was a bachelor. He was extremely friendly and attentive, and I could not help but feel that my connection with the Embassy had something to do with his attitude. By coincidence, we returned from New York on the same plane and became further acquainted, particularly since we had to spend a night in Miami before we could make connections with the plane for Guatemala. I do not recall learning anything further about him at that time. I did notice that he was unusually womanconscious to the extent of being boyishly exuberant despite his forty-odd years.

Upon our return to Guatemala he called at the Embassy, and I invited him to dinner at my home. He asked if he could bring a friend and came to our home with an extremely beautiful and intelligent young Costa Rican woman. Since Sr. Griffel could not be considered attractive by most standards and is afflicted by an extreme stammer, the beauty of his companion was all the more striking. We learned that she was on a "visit" from Costa Rica, but it was never quite clear whom she was visiting or where she was staying. I learned later that she was at one of Sr. Griffel's fincas, apparently living with him.

Sometime later Sr. Griffel invited my wife and me to one of his fincas which is located northeast of Guatemala City. During the course of that day he told us that before President Arbenz had taken office both he and the then President AREVALO had visited him at the finca. While he mentioned that he had acted as a





purchasing agent for the Guatemalan Government, his intimate connection with both the present and past chiefs of Guatemala seemed hardly justified on the basis of such a business relationship. I subsequently learned that Sr. Griffel had for some time acted as procurer for ex-President Arévalo and now, possibly, for President Arbenz.

Sr. Griffel stopped in to visit me periodically, particularly when he had to go to the Consulate for a visa, and I was aware that he was making frequent trips to purchase government merchandis He was always non-committal about the details of his business or about the Government, although he kept on seeking the friendship of both my wife and me. We continually avoided the relationship because of his unpleasant personality and because we distrusted him.

Few people with whom I had spoken knew much about Sr. Griffel, since he apparently kept pretty much in the background. The only place he seemed to be active was within the Jewish community, where I believe he acted as secretary of its principal social organization, possibly connected with the local synagogue.

When the Guatemalan Government opened bids for road machinery to be used on the Highway to the Atlantic, Sr. Griffel was one of the successful bidders (in the name of A. Zadik Company) and was mentioned briefly in a local press item, which questioned the validity of the bid. His name was quite garbled, another indication of the relative obscurity he has maintained and continues to maintain in Guatemalan affairs.

When I first met Sr. Griffel, he told me he had an aged father living in New York City whom he visited each time he travelled to that area. I believe he mentioned a married sister also living in New York City.

Sr. Griffel is extremely meticulous about his personal appearance (manicured and polished nails), is always lightly perfumed and smartly dressed. He is a tectotaler, but smokes cigarettes. He usually wears a homburg.

HEUrist:rs/fpb